KENNETH ANGER

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in Paris, "Moon" was described by Anger as a "lunar dream," depicting the classic pantomime figure of Pierrot, vainly attempting to reach the moon.

Anger next went to Italy to film "Eaux d'Artifice" (1953, 13 mins.), an abstract fable scored to Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons." Anger cast a circus dwarf that he met in Italy to play a Baroque lady melting into the waters of Rome's Tivoli Fountain. Returning to Hollywood in 1954, Anger made "Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome" (38 min.), a "mythological masquerade party" that included diarist Anais Nin among its pleasure-seekers. Anger based the film on a ritual devised by Aleister Crowley, the British writer and occultist whose teachings exerted enormous influence on Anger's work. Crowley, who died in 1947, felt he was the Beast of the Apocalypse, and fostered a belief in evil as "a positive principle."

In 1954, Anger moved to Europe again, where he remained for the next eight years, studying the works of Crowley and suffering a series of disappointments over aborted film projects. One involved Anger's effort to bring "The Story of O," Pauline Reage's sadomasochistic classic, to the screen. Another, "Thelema Abbey," was a documentary short, depicting Anger's restoration of a series of pornographic murals which Crowley had painted in Sicily.

Returning to the U.S. in 1962, Anger made "Scorpio Rising" (1963, 31 min.) — frequently called the most important underground film of the '60s — as a means of discovering how American pop culture had changed. Anger spent every weekend for three months with a Brooklyn motorcycle club, and came to see them as "a death mirror held up to the American culture."

Through a chaotic montage of images, Anger equated the bikers' love of violence and death with the Nazi Party, intercutting stock footage of Hitler's storm troopers, Marlon Brando in "The Wild One," and a scene of Jesus Christ on donkey back, the latter accompanied by the Shirelles' song, "He's a Rebel." The "Scorpio Rising" soundtrack, which also included Elvis Presley, Bobby Vinton, Ray Charles and the Surfaris, was inspired by Anger's strolls along the Coney Island boardwalk in the summer of 1962. In 1967, New York Times writer Elenore Lester described the impact made by "Scorpio" during its 1965 New York debut: "(The) crowd included in-the-groove psychoanalysts, artists and art critics, and a representation of what the inflated imaginations of newsmagazine editorialists see as 'the homosexual mafia.' "

"Almost overnight," Lester wrote, "display windows of elegant uptown boutiques had wicked motorcycle chains thrown over plush velvet couches, and models in couture dresses, poised between the handlebars of motorcycles, casting enigmatic glances at dangerous-looking drivers." "Scorpio Rising" also elicited a number of lawsuits, the strangest of which came from the American Nazi Party, charging that Anger had desecrated the swastika. In Japan, customs agents twice blocked copies of the film, prompting that country's only underground cinema to name itself "Scorpio Rising."

On the strength of this film, Anger received a $10,000 Ford Foundation grant to make "Kustom Kar Kommandos" (1965, 3½ min.), a look at Southern California auto fetishists which opens with a close-up shot of a white

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